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NOTES AND QUERIES.

INTERNATIONAL FOLK-LORE CONGRESSES. — The recent session of the congress, a condensed account of which is above printed, suggests some remarks. (1.) With regard to the significance of the term, the extremely catholic extension given by the directors of the congress, in their programme, will preclude any subsequent limitation. Folk-lore must be considered as including all surviving popular tradition, that is, both the tradition of words and that of custom. The application will vary with geographical boundaries; each people, in using the word, will think of the primitive notions and usages surviving in its own territory, as is well illustrated by the interesting communication on the folk-lore of Ceylon. So considered, "folk-lore" becomes an expression belonging to anthropology. It is a convenient, inclusive term, under which can be housed several branches of research which elsewhere meet with only a chilling reception. Its advantage is in emphasizing the importance of gathering up unwritten history, the history of ideas and manners belonging to any particular race. As for the science of folk-lore, the definition of this, for my own part, I should leave to the several investigators, who will doubtless conceive their respective departments in their own way. What primarily concerns us is the material, which will lend itself to be used by many sciences.

(2.) Congresses serve two good purposes: first, they make investigators in certain lines acquainted with each other; secondly, they bring the themes to the attention of the public, a notoriety which in its turn exerts an animating influence on the scholars themselves.

(3.) The great difficulty in rendering interesting the proceedings of a congress is, that the papers, being orally delivered, should be intended for the ear, whereas they are usually prepared with a view of being printed, and therefore designed for the eye. The result is, that they fail in effect on account of their conciseness and solidity. The conclusion seems to be that the articles ought indeed in the first instance to be written, so as to appear in the Proceedings; but they should not be read as written. The relator should be content with stating orally the substance of what his paper is intended to set forth; this oral relation may then become the basis of an interesting discussion, always the most fruitful part of a public meeting inasmuch as all the rest might equally well be simply committed to the printed page.

(4.) In the present congress, the contingent from France, Germany, and other European countries was not numerous. It is to be hoped that this may in the future be remedied, as the next session of the congress will undoubtedly be held on the Continent.

W. W. N.

ROUMANIAN FOLK-LORE. — Since Roumanian literature has but little circulation in this country, it gives us pleasure to notice that folk-lorists are at work in that distant kingdom also, and seem to be busy in collecting the rich stores of tales, myths, and legends preserved among the peasantry. A tale entitled "Fêt-Frumos din Lacrima" has been "transcribed" or para-

phrased into French by a Swiss from Neuchâtel, L. Bachelin, under the caption of "Bel-Enfant de la Larme," and, with its 71 pages in 12mo, forms the first volume of a collection of "Rhapsodies Roumaines" (Paris, "Semeur" literary review office, 1890). This solemn and curious myth has been obtained in Moldavia by Eminesco, and according to Bachelin's analysis is a cyclus of solar myths centring around Fêt-Frumos, who remains young and resplendent forever, and is a combination of Apollo and Hercules as to his qualities of grace and bodily strength. He is engaged in continual fights with Génar, with the Sorceress, and with the Mother of the Woods, all representing the powers of the Dark. Another Roumanic tale is "Român le Nasdravan," by J. Brun, published at Ghent, Belgium, 1890, with an introduction by L. Bachelin (reprinted from the "Magazin littéraire et scientifique"). This short narrative represents, in eastern Wallachia, what Tom Thumb is to the English people. Bachelin considers the hero of the story to be a crepuscularian genius, who, like the Child-Hermes of the Greeks, maliciously steals from Apollo his herds of cattle (the rays of the sun), and brings them to Pylos, or the "Doors of Heaven," — the young day is conquering the night with its innumerable monsters.

Alb. S. Gatschet.

SCHLOSSAR'S COLLECTION OF POPULAR PLAYS. — The folk-lorist Dr. Anton Schlossar, librarian of the University of Grätz, Austria, has for the last ten years gathered all he could of the earlier popular literature of his native land, paying special attention to the people's drama and dramatic essays in the Alpine province of Styria. The manuscripts of these are often in the hands of rustics, and not easily accessible; but Schlossar collected enough material for selecting from what he obtained only what seemed to be the best. There are in his collection religious plays made after texts of the New Testament, dolls, comedies, and several plays reminding us of Punch and Judy. The title of his publication, which is in two volumes, is as follows: "Deutsche Volksschauspiele. In Steiermark gesammelt, etc., nebst 'Leiden Christi' aus Kärnten." Halle, Max Niemeyer, 1891, 12mo, pp. 343 and 404. The following headings may give an idea of the contents: The "Paradeisspiel;" the Shepherd's Play; the Cripple's Play; The Birth of Christ; the Passion of Christ; The Drama of St. Nicholas; Genoveva; Judith and Holofernes; Hirlanda; St. Barbara; Susan; Der "bairische Hiesel"; Avarice cheated; After-plays. Those who find religious dramas of interest will find here plenty of this literature; the amateurs of worldly dramas may think that the play of the Bavarian robber and exceedingly popular character Hiesel (abbreviated from "Matthias") will certainly be worth perusing. It is partly composed in Bavarian dialect, and tragic situations constantly alternate with highly comical ones. From the "Annotations" we gather that this well-known robber of Southern Germany was executed in 1771. The "After-plays," or Nachspiele, form a peculiar genus in dramatic literature, and are in some manner comparable to the Satyrdrama of the Greeks, for both were intended to exhilarate the minds of the spectators after the performance of a tragedy or other piece of a serious character.